

Message Text

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ACTION IO-11

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C O N F I D E N T I A L TANANARIVE 0318

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PORG, PFOR, US

SUBJ: MULTILATERAL AFFAIRS: REQUEST FOR MULTILATERAL INFORMATION

REF: STATE 037591

1. DCM (NOW CHARGE) DESIGNATED MLO. FOLLOWING ARE OUR RE-
SPONSES TO QUESTIONS POSED PARA 7 REFTEL:

(A)-1 MADAGASCAR'S PRIMARY MULTILATERAL INTERESTS AND OBJECTIVES
IN 1976. MADAGASCAR'S ALMOST EXCLUSIVE MULTILATERAL OBJECTIVE IS
TO IMPROVE ITS CREDENTIALS AS A BONA FIDE MEMBER OF THE RADICAL
NON-ALIGNED COUNTRIES OF THE THIRD (FOURTH?) WORLD. IN ACCORD-
ANCE WITH ITS NEW "MALAGASY SOCIALIST REVOLUTION" (APPROVED BY
REFERENDUM OF DECEMBER 21, 1975), GDRM HAS USED EVERY CONCEIVABLE
OCCASION TO LAMBAST IN VAGUE AND GENERAL TERMS "COLONIALISM,
CAPITALISM AND IMPERIALISM" AND TO SUPPORT VERBALLY ANY AND EVERY
"LIBERATION MOVEMENT". IT HAS, HOWEVER, BEEN PERSISTENTLY PRO-
MOTING PRESIDENT RATSIRAKA'S INDIAN OCEAN "ZONE OF PEACE" PRO-
POSALS IN THE UN, OAU AND GROUP OF 77. NONETHELESS, IN RECENT
MEMORY IT HAS NOT BROUGHT ANY IMPORTANT NEW INITIATIVES TO THE
UN OR OTHER MULTILATERAL ORGANIZATIONS, AND ITS DELEGATIONS, AS
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FAR AS WE CAN TELL FROM HERE, ARE VIRTUALLY MUTE WHEN IT COMES TO

MAKING A PROFOUND CONTRIBUTION. MADAGASCAR'S PERMREP IN NEW YORK SPOKE UP IN EARLY FEBRUARY ON ISSUE OF COMOROS' INDEPENDENCE BECAUSE MADAGASCAR IS COMOROS' CLOSEST NEIGHBOR AND MALAGASY ENJOY THROWING BRICKBATS AT FRENCH EVEN THOUGH FRENCH CONTINUE TO PROVIDE CONSIDERABLE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO GDRM.

(A)-2. AS FOR THE INDIAN OCEAN "ZONE OF PEACE", MADAGASCAR DOES NOT HAVE A SOURCE OF POWER ELSEWHERE AND IS NOT WILLING TO BE IDENTIFIED AS AN "AFRICAN NATION". IT HAS THEREFORE DEVELOPED ITS OWN "SPHERE OF INFLUENCE", BEING THE LARGEST INSULAR COUNTRY IN THE INDIAN OCEAN. MOREOVER, MALAGASY LEADERS HAVE OCCASIONALLY BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN SUCKING IN OTHER INDIAN OCEAN RIPARIANS, SUCH AS INDIA, TO SUPPORT MALAGASY STATEMENTS CONDEMNING MILITARY BASES IN THE INDIAN OCEAN.

(A)-3. WE ARE NOT AWARE THAT MADAGASCAR IS SEEKING MEMBERSHIP IN ADDITIONAL MULTILATERAL ORGANIZATIONS OR IS PROMOTING MALAGASY CANDIDATES FOR POSITIONS IN MULTILATERAL ORGANIZATIONS.

(B) INFLUENCES ON POLICY-MAKING. AS NOTED ABOVE, MADAGASCAR SEEMS TO CARE LITTLE FOR THE SUBSTANCE OF ANY INTERNATIONAL ISSUE, SO LONG AS IT CAN ASSOCIATE ITSELF WITH THE MOST RADICAL COUNTRIES OF THE WORLD, OF AFRICA IN GENERAL AND ALGERIA IN PARTICULAR. IT IS CAREFUL TO MAINTAIN A BALANCE IN ITS RELATIONS WITH BOTH THE USSR AND THE PRC, BOTH OF WHICH HAVE SUBSTANTIAL REPRESENTATION HERE AND PROVIDE CONSIDERABLE AID TO MADAGASCAR (ALTHOUGH, AT THIS TIME, THE CHINESE SEEM TO BE WELL AHEAD IN TERMS OF DOLLAR VALUE). WE ARE NOT AWARE THAT MADAGASCAR HAS ATTEMPTED TO INFLUENCE OTHER COUNTRIES ON MAJOR MULTILATERAL ISSUES BUT IT HAS DONE SO FOR THE INDIAN OCEAN "ZONE OF PEACE" INITIATIVE AND THE CURRENT COMORIAN-FRENCH DISPUTE ON THE STATUS OF MAYOTTE.

(C) INSTRUCTIONS TO DELEGATES. MFA OFFICIALS HAVE INFORMED US THAT ALTHOUGH INSTRUCTIONS ARE GIVEN TO THEIR REPS AT INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS, THE SENIOR MALAGASY REP (EXCEPT AT THAT UN - SEE BELOW) IS USUALLY ALSO THE SENIOR POLICY-MAKING OFFICIAL IN THE PARTICULAR FIELD. HE THEREFORE HAS SOME FLEXIBILITY IN PRINCIPLE BUT IN ACTUAL FACT WOULD NOT DARE TAKE AN INITIATIVE OR VOTE ALONG QUESTIONABLE LINES UNLESS HE WAS ABSOLUTELY SURE THAT IT WOULD BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH RATSIRAKA'S WISHES. AS FOR INSTRUCTIONS BEING TIMELY AND REALISTIC, AN MFA OFFICIAL INFORMED US THAT DELEGATES TO INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS SPEND LITTLE TIME REPORTING DEVELOPMENTS

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BACK TO TANANARIVE AND DO NOT NORMALLY DEPEND ON NOR SEEK INSTRUCTIONS FROM HERE. IN THE OAU, WE WERE INFORMED, THEY USED TO BE TOLD TO "VOTE WITH THE MAJORITY OF THE OAU"; NOW, IT WOULD PROBABLY BE "VOTE WITH THE PROGRESSIVE STATES OF THE OAU" AND THE SAME GUIDELINES PROBABLY APPLY TO THEIR VOTING IN OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS.

(D) PERMREPS' INDEPENDENT AUTHORITY. HEADS OF MALAGASY DELEGATIONS

ARE LOYAL CIVIL SERVANTS WITH NO INDEPENDENT POWER. RABETAFIKA, THEIR PERMREP IN NEW YORK, HAS OCCUPIED HIS PRESENT JOB FOR 8 YEARS. HOWEVER, AS A HOLDOVER FROM THE PRO-FRENCH TSIRANANA REGIME (WHICH ENDED IN 1972) AND AS THE BROTHER OF AN ARMY COLONEL WHO MAY WELL BE THE LEADER OF ANTI-RATSIRAKA OPPOSITION (NOW QUIESCENT) WITHIN THE MILITARY, RABETAFIKA'S POSITION MAY NOT APPEAR TO BE ENTIRELY SECURE; ON THE OTHER HAND, HE IS UNDOUBTEDLY WELL AWARE OF THE RISKS THAT HE MIGHT BE TAKING BY GETTING OUT OF LINE WITH RATSIRAKA'S POLICIES.

(E) RECEPTIVITY OF US REPRESENTATIONS. SINCE JUNE 1975 WHEN RATSIRAKA TOOK OVER GDRM, US HAS NOT HAD MUCH LEVERAGE HERE. INDIRECTLY, WE HAVE HAD SYMPATHETIC HEARINGS FROM CIVIL SERVANTS, PARTICULARLY THOSE IN MFA WHO IN PAST HAVE EXPRESSED WARM FEELINGS FOR US, BUT WE OFTEN DO NOT EVEN GET RESPONSES TO DEMARCHES WE MAKE. WE ARE NOT EVEN CERTAIN THAT OUR DEMARCHES HAVE BEEN TAKEN UP AT SIGNIFICANT HIGHER LEVEL, WHETHER MINISTERIAL OR PRESIDENTIAL, WHICH MAY BE CIVIL SERVANTS' WAY OF PROTECTING US- KNOWING IN ADVANCE THAT WE WOULD RECEIVE NEGATIVE RESPONSE - FROM RATSIRAKA'S ANTI-US VENOM. WITHIN RECOLLECTION OF ANY EMBOFF HERE NOW, GDRM HAS NEVER SOLICITED OUR SUPPORT FOR ANY MULTILATERAL MATTER.

OVERVIEW. ALTHOUGH RATSIRAKA FASHIONS HIMSELF AS A LEADING THIRD WORLD THINKER, IT IS OUR IMPRESSION THAT HE DOES NOT KNOW WHAT THE REAL ROLE OF MULTILATERAL ORGANIZATIONS IS OR COULD BE IN RELATION TO SPECIFIC GDRM INTERESTS OTHER THAN IMAGE-BUILDING. YET HE IS FAR MORE INTERESTED IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, HAVING SERVED FOR NEARLY THREE YEARS AS FOREIGN MINISTER, THAN IN DOMESTIC PROBLEMS, EVEN IF MOST OF HIS INTERNATIONAL INTEREST IS OF LITTLE RELEVANCE TO MADAGASCAR. BECAUSE OF THE LATTER AND RATSIRAKA'S CONCENTRATION ON IMAGE-BUILDING, OUR DEMARCHES HAVE HAD LITTLE IMPACT. ON THE OTHER HAND, IT IS UNLIKELY THAT SOVIETS (EVEN ON ANGOLA) OR CHINESE HAVE EVER HAD TO WEIGH IN WITH RATSIRAKA TO GET THE MALAGASY TO VOTE ONE
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WAY OR ANOTHER IN UN OR ELSEWHERE, NOTWITHSTANDING FACT THAT SOVIETS AND CHINESE HAVE NOT ALWAYS VOTED THE SAME WAY.SHEINBAUM

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